Huge Weapons Losses On West Coast Cited

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Washington Post Staff Writer

The Army is losing an astonishing amount of munitions on the West Coast, apparently to radicals bent on embarrassing "Uncle Whiskers," a Senate subcommittee was told yesterday.

California's chief deputy attorney general, Charles A. O'Brien, said the stolen guns and explosives even included munitions seized by law enforcement officials and turned over to the Army for safekeeping.

"I think it came as a great shock to the armed forces that they were losing what they were losing," O'Brien told the Senate Permanent Investigations Subcommittee.

Radicals, he said, find "a particular ideological kick in getting the material from Uncle Whiskers himself."

Just last weekend, O'Brien reported, burglars made off with half a case of dynamite and 300 loose dynamite sticks from the Presidio, headquarters of the Sixth Army in San Francisco.

The half case had been part of a 70-ton arsenal seized at the San Francisco mansion of wealthy eccentric William E. Thoresen III, who was recently killed in Fresno, allegedly by his wife.

The rest of the dynamite, O'Brien reported, had initially been turned over to the FBI by a Protestant minister on behalf of a repentant member of his congregation.

The California official said federal and state investigators over the last two years have recovered machine guns, grenades, plastic explosives, bazookas and thousands of rounds of ammunition presumably stolen both from California military bases and West Coast ports loaded with shipments bound for Vietnam.

Still another piece from the Thoresen cache, a machine gun equipped with a silencer, O'Brien reported, was seized from Black Panthers who used it in an April 17 shootout with Oakland police. He said it had been stolen from Fort Kronkhite, a deactivated Army post in San Francisco.

Federal and state undercover agents, O'Brien added, paid out $4,000 in April for 94 pounds of elastic explosives, along with bazookas, grenades and other items, as part of an investigation in the tense community of Isla Vista. The munitions, he said, were stolen from Fort Ord.

The subcommittee was also told of Marine base pilferage and large-scale thefts of munitions waiting shipment to Vietnam at Port Chicago, Calif., and the port at Oakland.

Commentator Role For Agnew Nipped

United Press International

Vice President Spiro T. Agnew's embryonic career as a potential radio commentator has been nipped in the bud.

Elmer Lower, president of ABC News, announced that network policy would bar Agnew from substituting for ABC commentator Paul Harvey. He said a suggestion by Harvey that Harvey and Agnew swap jobs for a day was made "in a lighted-hearted manner."

"Actually," Lower said in a statement, "under longstanding ABC news policy, news broadcasts and commentary are written and presented on the air only by professional newsmen, such as Paul Harvey, who are under contract to ABC."